

OUR NEW SERIAL

# The Captives of the Kaid

By B. MARCHANT

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Thirteen-year-old Lalla was the only one who never shrank from her grandfather, Squire Trevor, of Oakhurst, Manor. One day when visiting the picture gallery with one of the maids she came across a picture turned face to the wall. The maid told her it was the picture of the squire's eldest son, who had been drowned by his father, and had never been heard of since. The picture was turned for Lalla to see. What a nice kind face he had. "Perhaps if he had come back you would never be heiress of the Manor," said the maid. During a thunder storm Lalla is lost in the woods. She is found by a young sailor lad, who carries her towards home. At the door the lad hurries away without waiting to be thanked. Circumstances lead to the belief that the sailor is the son of the Squire's eldest son.

"Which decidedly she hadn't got at the present minute," retorted Sir Basil testily, the very fact of his unwelcome irritability bearing witness to his perturbation. "We can't be more than three miles from land, and the wind is in our favour for getting in—to take to show a clean pair of heels now to the shore, even if we wished to do so."

The mate dropped his voice to a lower key, though plainly he was urging something that his superior officer would not consent to, for Lalla saw her uncle shake his head with an unconvinced air; but as she only caught here and there a word of Davidson's, she could not even guess what his objections to going into harbour might portend.

"Natives—ladies on board—open sea, and mariners' luck"—nothing of this was capable of a satisfactory solution by her just then; so she dismissed it from her mind entirely for a time, and returned to the saloon to tell her mother that the head of the "Sybil" was turned for the last, and they were going to run into a harbour, if only they succeeded in finding it.

"How very nice that will be, for a storm is certainly impending, and I should be ill again if it sea became very rough," replied Mrs. Trevor, who was a martyr to seasickness, and for that reason had engaged an experienced stewardess to attend upon herself and Lalla, instead of bringing a maid with her from the Manor.

"Poor Mummy, I'm glad that I am never sea-sick; it must be horrid. I hope they will find the harbour and get in all right, for I should dearly love to give them a run across country, and see what the place is like, even though it doesn't appear very interesting from outside. Won't you come up on deck, Mother? I think the boat is really for more bearable up there than down here—at least it is not so stuffy."

They went on deck for half an hour or more; but by that time the heavens had gathered blackness, whilst the wind came in long, swirling gusts that took their breath away, and made them glad to take refuge below.

The "Sybil" was skimming through the water now like some dainty ocean bird, her white bow dipping and lifting as she cutted to the unfriendly land she was approaching so fast. The channel in which she was visible, and it only the light would show for another hour, he would carry his vessel in triumphantly. It wanted more than that time to wind down; but this evening there were clouds of the gathering storm to be reckoned with, and already the light was dim and uncertain, whilst the wind was freshening to a gale. He was standing with his one foot on the glass, shouting his orders to the men at the wheel, whilst Davidson close by stood grim and silent, his face set in lines of stern disapproval.

"We shall do it! We shall do it!" yelled Sir Basil, stamping with quite frantic delight, as the "Sybil" lifted on the crest of a big roller,

in itself a calamity. When, therefore, he saw his master starting off upon another of these mysterious journeys, Ighli at once resolved that he would go too, so that he might see for himself what happened.

Keeping so far in the rear that neither Sid 'el Bashir nor the two slaves could catch sight of him, the little black boy trotted after the travellers, following them past the sheep and cattle inclosures immediately surrounding the door, across the fig orchards and grain fields, into the forests of prickly oak, gumcistus, and arbutus that clothed the steep hill-side.

"They go to a soko," he whispered to himself, as, panting and perspiring, he toiled along in the wake of the travellers; but his eyes shone with delight, and his heaving breast was filled with a most resolute determination to see the end of this business at whatever cost to himself. A soko was a country market where slaves and cattle, horses and sheep, were bought and sold, with every other conceivable article to deal with in the sparsely settled region; and Ighli wanted to see a soko more than he wanted anything, saving, indeed, the father he had so strangely lost.

But he remembered later, as the forest gave place to thickets of thorny scrub, and grass a long that his small legs had hard work to struggle through it, that a soko had been held in the district only one moon previously, and that Sid 'el Bashir had sold five hundred head of cattle, three hundred horses, and a hundred slaves—both men and women; so that this subhiyah, or morning's ride, could scarcely be taken for the sake of attending a market, since the wild districts were held only once or twice a year. This was a disappointing revelation, but Ighli argued to himself that if it were not a soko, it might easily be something quite as interesting; besides, he was by this time so far from Sid 'el Bashir's door as to be completely lost, and his only chance of ever finding himself again lay in taking care not to lose sight of the party in front. So he toiled on still, a very tired and hungry boy, but with unabated curiosity.

His efforts were rewarded presently by seeing the party halt, whilst Sid 'el Bashir descended from his mule, and began actively engaged in directing the efforts of the two slaves, who were now digging a hole under the shadow of a big boulder. Both the slaves appeared tired with their long tramp from the door in the hot sun, and Sid 'el Bashir never spared any thing or anyone belonging to him. One of them was more exhausted than the other, or appeared to be, for he kept falling down, and did not move or even wince when his master kicked him.

Ighli, who, hidden by the long grass and scrub, had kept quite close, believed in his own mind that the slave was shamming. His name was Hashem, and Sid 'el Bashir had bought him at the last soko but one, taking him in exchange for a couple of broken-winded mules; a great bargain, and one that the cheating old miser had chuckled over ever since, although, had he but known it, it was one he was to pay dearly for in the end.

Presently Sid 'el Bashir left off kicking Hashem, who lay spread out and limp as if already dead, and hurried to help the other slave in finishing the hole, and hiding the mule's burden therein.

When this was done, the hole was filled up again, and grass and scrub arranged over it to look as natural, undisturbed appearance to the spot, then, without a minute's warning of what he was going to do, Sid 'el Bashir cocked his long gun, and coolly shot his patient helper through the heart.

The barrel had not done smothering the death-cry of the murdered slave, who still lay in Ighli's horrified gaze, when, with a snarling growl like an angry wild beast, Hashem sprang upon the old miser from behind.

Taken quite unawares, for Sid 'el Bashir had believed Hashem to be dying, if not already dead—he was unable even to draw a dagger in self-defence, and so it was a terrible tragedy which Ighli saw that morning on the hills.

He understood then why it was his own death-cry and sorely-lamented father had never come back to cheer the heart of his little girl, for it was plain the poor black had been killed by his master, even as the one Ighli had seen die but a few minutes before.

But now Sid 'el Bashir himself was dead, and his lean old body was being hastily stripped by Hashem, who was apparently searching for something which he supposed to be hidden on the dead man's person.

Judging by his extravagant capers of delight, he found that for which he had searched, as Ighli saw him tuck some object, like a strip of parchment, into the ragged loincloth which was the only garment he wore; then, without a further loss of time, he proceeded to dig up the sacks of treasure which had just been buried; and, loading the burden once more on to the back of the mule, he donned the flowing garments of his dead master, and, mounting the other mule, rode slowly away by the opposite way to which he had come.

Again Ighli started in pursuit; not so much from curiosity as from an instinct of self-preservation; for he dared not stay alone in the wilderness, where Sid 'el Bashir and the murdered slave lay with dead faces turned upward to the sky. There would be jackals coming to the feast, with hyenas and leopards for companions by and by; and if provisions ran short, who could tell but that the wild beasts might not slacken their hunger on the little black boy who had wandered so far from his door.

What what was two legs compared to four—especially when the two belonged to a little black boy, who had started on his travels without any breakfast!

It was the very longest journey Ighli had ever undertaken, and he was so thoroughly lost that the moon he could hope for was that he might keep the mules in sight, until he reached some door where he could rest and shelter.

But the haunts of men were the very places that Hashem most desired to shun; and as the country, through which he travelled, became continually wilder and more broken, Ighli was soon filled with complete despair, and faced with the dreadful alternative of either starving and being eaten by the wild beasts of the desert, or discovering himself to Hashem and being killed by him. Of the two fates, Ighli thought he would prefer to take his chance with the denizens of the wilds; but, in the end, choice in the matter was taken from him.

The two mules had been going slower and slower, as if they too were

tired and hungry, until, reaching a little stream trickling out from some big rocks, Hashem halted, dismounted, unloaded the burden from the back of the second mule, tethered both animals, and then prepared to rest.

(To be continued)

## FORESTS AND WATER POWER.

We are just as callous and indifferent over the destruction of our natural resources. People seem to lose sight of the fact that the wiping out of large forest areas by fire also means the obliteration, to a large extent, of our water power so that the permanency and utilization of this great asset is also jeopardized, threatening not only the development of our industries, but also transportation facilities and the thousand and one other necessities of life which modern ingenuity has provided for our comfort, entertainment, and pleasure. Deputy Fire Marshal Lewis, Ontario.

## NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW PROTECTS WORKERS' WAGES

Washington.—Under the new bankruptcy laws money due as wages or as security which employers sometimes exact from workers will not be dischargeable in bankruptcy. Employers who resume business after going through bankruptcy will still be liable for the money due their workers at the time they fail. Salesmen will benefit by the law as well as manual workers. Under the former bankruptcy law the worker was regarded as an ordinary creditor and had no redress whatever to collect wages due, owing to the fact that many employers about to become bankrupt resort to a fraudulent concealment of their property. The new law is designed to deter prospective bankrupts from defaulting in the payment of wages and from speculating with money borrowed from their employees. Bankrupt employers can now be held for wages in the bankruptcy business after their discharge from bankruptcy.

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